DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 270 115 IR 051 530

AUTHOR Christensen, Paul Martin
TITLE Jose Vasconcelos, Philosopher-Librarian.
PUB DATE Jun 76
NOTE 53p.; Student research paper, Brigham Young University.
PUB TYPE Historical Materials (060) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Developing Nations; *Educational History; Intellectual History; *Latin American History; Library Role; *Library Science; Position Papers
IDENTIFIERS *Vasconcelos (Jose)

ABSTRACT

Jose Vasconcelos (1882-1959), a major figure of modern Mexican education, also was instrumental in the development of the field of librarianship in Mexico. This research paper presents Vasconcelos' philosophy of librarianship through a detailed study of his writings and a review of major secondary sources. Relying solely on the subjective interpretation of historical documents, the study examines Vasconcelos' autobiographical, philosophical, sociological, and educational works for their relevance to his overall philosophy of librarianship. A brief historical background is provided to place the study in the context of the political upheavals that occurred in Mexico at the time of Vasconcelos' writing. Following an introduction, the paper describes the primary and secondary sources consulted and includes sections on: The Man; The Philosopher; The Sociologist; The Educator; and The Librarian. Bibliographies of sources consulted and cited are included. (THC)

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JOSÉ VASCONCELOS, PHILOSOPHER-LIBRARIAN

by

Paul Martin Christensen

A Research Paper

Submitted to The

School of Library and Information Sciences

Brigham Young University

Provo, Utah

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements of

L. I. S. 697

June, 1976

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ABSTRACT

José Vasconcelos (1882-1959), one of the major figures of modern Mexican education, also was instrumental in the field of librarianship. This research formulates his philosophy of librarianship through a detailed study of the author's own writings and the major secondary sources.

The ultimate goal of society, according to Vasconcelos, was the reaching of the aesthetic state, which is built upon all of knowledge. Therefore, librarianship should aid society in achieving that state with the librarian as the philosophical guide.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is with gratitude that I acknowledge the advice and direction accorded me by Dr. H. Curtis Wright during the preparation of this study. I would also like to record my deepest appreciation to my wife, Colleen, without whose help this study would not have been completed.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the problem

José Vasconcelos (1882-1959), while unknown in North American circles, was one of Latin America's most renowned philosophers and educators. As a creative and productive writer, he gave birth to many ideas which encouraged Latin American national consciousness. Although not widely known as a librarian, it was through his efforts as the "Father of Popular Education in Mexico"[1] that many of the early popular libraries were founded.

Statement of the Problem

What was José Vasconcelos' philosophy of librarianship?

Methodology

The study does not utilize any of the empirical methodologies, but relies solely upon the subjective interpretation of historical documents. There are many documents about Vasconcelos and they will be consulted; but since few, if any, of them deal with him specifically as a librarian, the study will draw primarily upon his own published works. Specifically, his autobiographical, philosophical, sociological and educational writings will be examined for their relevence to his over-all philosophy of librarianship. His extensive writings in all

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[1]Patrick Romanell, Making of the Mexican Mind; A Study In Recent Mexican Thought (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1952), p. 97.

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these categories, and especially in education and philosophy, are germane to his views of librarianship.

On the basis of data from these documents, a critical subjective interpretation of Vasconcelos' philosophy of librarianship will then be formulated.

Amplification of the Problem Statement

The study will examine the over-all philosophy of education espoused by José Vasconcelos and its specific pertinence to the subsequent development of his philosophy of librarianship.

A brief historical background will be necessary due to the great political upheavals occurring in Mexico at the time; involving the transition from an aristocratic to a more popular form of government and the emergence of the common man as a vital force in the Mexican community.

The study will not deal with the wide range of Vasconcelos' interests beyond the fields of education and librarianship. It will not investigate problems of library education, administration, specific library operations, or Mexican library development. Neither is its purpose to judge nor to justify Vasconcelos' opinions of philosophy.

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Chapter 2

LITERATURE SEARCH

Since José Vasconcelos is not well known in North America, the majority of the literature covers him as a philosopher only and deals with his other contributions only superficially. Sources that cover areas where he did make substantial contributions are quick to give Vasconcelos credit and praise for his work.

Primary sources

Because of the wide divergence of topics on which José Vasconcelos wrote, it seems appropriate to divide them into major areas. His writings can be divided into four broad topics: autobiographical, philosophical, sociological and educational. Some of the topics overlap into more than one area. However, for reasons of clarity they will only be listed in one category.

Autobiographical writings. Vasconcelos wrote a five volume autobiography under the title Ulises criollo. The first volume in this series, Ulises criollo: la vida del autor escrita por él mismo,[1] was first published in 1935 and covers the first thirty years of Vasconcèlos' life. In 1936, the second volume, La tormenta: segunda parte de Ulises criollo was published.[2] La tormenta deals with the time span between

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[1] Jose Vasconcelos, Ulises criollo: la vida del autor escrita por él mismo, Vol. I (1957) of Obras Completas, 4 vols.; (Mexico: Libreros Mexicanos Unidos, 1957-1961), pp. 287-704.

[2] Vasconcelos, La tormenta: segunda parte de Ulises criollo, Vol. I (1957) of Obras Completas, pp. 723-1214.

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two of Mexico's presidents, Madero and Carranza. El disastre: tercera parte de Ulises criollo was written in 1937 and first appeared in 1938.[1] It deals with the administrations of Presidents Obregon and Calles and ends with the assassination of Calles. The fourth volume, El proconsulado: cuarta parte de Ulises criollo, first published in 1939, deals with Vasconcelos' unsuccessful campaign for the Mexican presidency.[2] The fifth and final volume, La flama: Los de arriba en la Revolucion; historia y tragedia, was published posthumously in 1959 and covers Vasconcelos' life up to 1939.[3]

Philosophical writings. Vasconcelos developed a philosophical system which he called aesthetic monism. Vasconcelos elaborated his philosophy in many published works. In 1918, the book Monismo estético was published, detailing this philosophy.[4] The final volume of his works on philosophy was published in 1952 with the title Todología (Filosofía de la coordinación),[5] which combines and coordinates all of his philosophical writings.

Sociological writings. One of Vasconcelos most popular books, La raza cósmica, was published in 1925.[6] This book deals with

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[1]Vasconcelos, El disastre: tercera parte de Ulises criollo, Vol. I (1957) of Obras Completas, pp. 1215-1792.

[2]Vasconcelos, El proconsulado: Cuarta parte de Ulises criollo, Vol. II (1959) of Obras Completas, pp. 9-567.

[3]Vasconcelos, La flama: Los de arriba en la Revolucion; historia y tragedia, Vol. IV (1961) of Obras Completas, pp. 708-1292.

[4]Vasconcelos, Monismo estético: ensayos, Vol. IV (1961) of Obras Completas, pp. 9-92.

[5]Vasconcelos, Todología (Filosofía de la coordinación) Vol. IV of Obras Completas, pp. 817-954.

[6]Vasconcelos, La raza cósmica, Vol. II (1958) of Obras Completas, pp. 903-1068.

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Vasconcelos' thoughts on race. In 1926, the same theme was developed in a lecture series delivered at the University of Chicago entitled Aspects of Mexican Civilization.[1] Vasconcelos' ideas on panamericanism are treated in Bolivarismo y monroismo: temas iberoamericanos, published in 1934.[2] In 1950, a book of Vasconcelos' speeches was published. This volume, Discursos 1920-50, adds to the understanding of Vasconcelos' sociological views among the many topics included in the book.[3]

Educational writings. In a speech given in 1910 to a pre-revolutionary group of youthful intellectuals known as the Ateneo de la Juventud, Vasconcelos pays homage to Gabino Barreda, the leader and founder of the positivist movement in Mexican education, in which he expresses his feeling toward the positivist theory.[4]

In 1935, Vasconcelos published a book on his theory of education, De Robinson a Odiseo: pedagogía estructiva.[5] As part of his complete works, a section entitled Cartas y Documentos deals heavily with his involvement in education.[6] In 1950, José Vasconcelos wrote an article in the Mexican daily newspaper, Novedades, outlining his ideas on classical education.[7]

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[1]Vasconcelos, Aspects of Mexican Civilization (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1926).

[2]Vasconcelos, Bolivarismo y monroismo: temas iberoamericanos, Vol. II (1958) of Obras Completas, pp. 1305-1492.

[3]Vasconcelos, Discursos: 1920-50 (Mexico: Ediciones Botas, 1950).

[4]Vasconcelos, "Don Gabino Barreda y las ideas comtemporaneas," Vol. I (1957) of Obras Completas, pp. 57-80.

[5]Vasconcelos, De Robinson a Odiseo: pedagogía estructiva, Vol II (1958) of Obras Completas, pp. 1495-1720.

[6]Vasconcelos, Cartas y documentos Vol. II (1959) of Obras Completas, pp. 777-85.

[7]Vasconcelos, "Educacion clasica," Novedades, 6 mayo de 1950, p. 4.

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Secondary sources

The secondary sources have also been divided into four general categories: biographical workes about Vasconcelos, documents dealing with Vasconcelos' philosophical theory, books on the sociological background, and sources dealing with the educational system in Mexico during Vasconcelos' period as Secretary of Public Education.

Biographical works. In 1952, Romanell wrote what has become a classic work.[1] Vasconcelos is treated in one chapter dealing with his philosophy and placing him in Mexican history. In 1960, Romanell discussed José Vasconcelos' involvement in the Ateneo de la Juventud.[2] DeBeer's definitive biography was published in 1966 and includes an estensive bibliography.[3] Both Atkin and Gruening aid in developing a feeling for the historical time period.[4]

Philosophical works. Salmeron, in a chapter of the book by de la Cueva, discusses the 20th century Mexican philosophers in depth and specifically treats the philosophy within its historical context.[5] In 1970, Ivie published an article which contributes depth to the body of interpretations of Vasconcelos' philosophies.[6]

Sociological works. An over-all treatment of Vasconcelos'

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[1]Patrick Romanell, Making of the Mexican Mind; A Study in Recent Mexican Thought (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1952).

[2]Romanell, "Bergson in Mexico: A Tribute to Jose Vasconcelos," Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, 21 (1960-61), 502-3.

[3]Gabriella DeBeer, José Vasconcelos and His World (new York: Las Americas Publishing Co., 1966).

[4]Ronald Atkin, Revolution: Mexico 1910-20 (New York: John Day Co., 1970) and Ernest Gruening, Mexico and Its Heritage (New York: The Dentury Co., 1928).

[5]Mario de la Cueva and others, Major Trends in Mexican Philosophy (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966).

[6]Stanley Ivie, "Aesthetic Monism and Education," Peabody Journal of Education, 48 (October, 1970), 63-70.

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sociological views is given by Haddox, within the context of Vasconcelos' philosophical writings.[1]

Educational works. In 1951, Kneller treated Vasconcelos' contributions to the education of the Mexican people in considerable depth[2] while Paz gave an account of Vasconcelos' activities during his term as Secretary of Public Education.[3] A comparison between Vasconcelos' and Dewey's philosophies is given by Ivie in 1966.[4] In 1971, under the auspices of the University of Arizona a conference on Mexican education was held and contributions were later edited by Ivie in a Monograph Series.[5] Larroyo gives a detailed history of Mexican educational development.[6]

Summation of the Literature Searched

José Vasconcelos' library activities have not been the subject of any major research. This is a facet of his life which appears to be untouched and unrecognized both in the secondary and primary sources. Vasconcelos, himself, seemed not to give his work in education and librarianship pre-eminence in his own writings. The greater part of his compositions deal with philosophy and politics. The authors of the secondary sources seem to take their cue from Vasconcelos and devote

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[1] John H. Haddox, Vasconcelos of Mexico: Philosopher and Prophet (Austin: Universtiy of Texas Press, 1967).

[2] George F. Kneller, The Education of the Mexican Nation (New York: Columbia University Press, 1951).

[3] Octavio Paz, The Labyrinth of Solitude: Life and Thought in Mexico (New York: Grove Press, 1951).

[4] Ivie, "A Comparison in Educational Philosophy: Jose Vasconcelos and John Dewey," Comparative Education Review, 1966 (October, 1966), 402-5.

[5] Ivie, "Mexican Education in Cultural Perspective," University of Arizona, College of Education Monograph Series, #5, 1971.

[6] Francisco Larroyo, Historia Comparada de La Educacion en Mexico (Mexico: Editorial Porrua, 1959).

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most of their attention to his philosophy.

It is the objective of this research to create, from Vasconcelos' own writings and secondary sources, his philosophy of librarianship.

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Chapter 3

THE MAN

José Vasconcelos is, without question, one of the most inspiring and fascinating figures that Mexico has produced.

> [His] . . . life spans a period from the end of one century far into the maturity of the next one; it is nutured by a foreign philosophy [positivism] adapted to the political needs of the moment, which is later repudiated by a new generation of intellectuals; it covers the years of a stagnating dictatorship to the birth of a democratic republic; it sees the replacement of one literary movement by another. All these circumstances--historical, political, and literary--are related. They are the elements that combine to form the complex structure that is modern Mexico. In this structure José Vasconcelos has a place. To this structure he contributed generously. Although educated under the official policy of positivism, he joined with others in the Ateneo de la Juventud to replace it. He actively participated as a politician in the Revolution of 1910 and contributed to the literary outgrowth of this event with one of the best known novels of the Revolution.[1]

José Vasconcelos was born in Oaxaca, Mexico, on February 27, 1882. His father was employed by the Mexican government as a customs inspector in various Mexican cities. This gave the family the opportunity to travel and to live near the North American border. While living so near the border, José Vasconcelos went to school in the United States and learned to speak English.

His early education took place at home under the supervision of his mother. Vasconcelos later stated that his parents wanted to protect him from absorbing alien culture; therefore, all things Mexican were emphasized. The fables of Samaniego were used as memory drills. The

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[1]Gabriella DeBeer, José Vasconcelos and His World (New York: Las Americas Publishing Co., 1966), pp. 1-2.

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young pupil and his mother read a Historia de México together. At an early age he was taught to handle México a través de los siglos and the atlas of García Cubas.[1]

Vasconcelos' formal education began while the family was living in the northern border town of Piedras Negras. While living there, he attended classes in Eagle Pass, Texas. After a series of moves, the family went to Mexico City. There, in the capital, Vasconcelos went to the Escuela Nacional Preparatoria until he completed requirements for his bachillerato (the equivalent of a high school diploma).

At thirteen, Vasconcelos was offered a scholarship to the University of Texas. His parents turned down the scholarship, since they wanted their son educated as a Mexican.[2]

From the Escuela Nacional Preparatoria, he went to the Escuela Nacional de Jurisprudencia. By accelerating the program, Vasconcelos was able to complete the five year law course in three and one half years in 1905.

In 1906, Vasconcelos received the first of many public positions. He was appointed to a federal post in the Mexican state of Durango. He held that post for five months, then returned to Mexico City to work for a New York City based law firm.

At this time, Vasconcelos became active and known in the intellectual circles of Mexico. In 1909, he participated in founding the

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[1] Jose Vasconcelos, Ulises criollo: la vida del autor escrita por él mismo, Vol. I (1957) of Obras Completas, 4 vols.; (Mexico: Libreros Mexicanos Unidos, 1957-1961), p. 321.

[2] Ibid., p. 342

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Ateneo de la Juventud, a convocation of young Mexican intellectuals who met fortnightly for lectures and discussions on philosophical themes.[1]

> Compared to the intellectual generation immediately preceding, that of the Ateneo presents certain features proper to itself..... All of them [the members] are characterized by a deep interest in philosophical and social problems and also by a conviction, perhaps inherited from Justo Sierra, that the problem of Mexico was a problem of education. All held Greece and the Latin poets in the greatest esteem; at the same time, however, they valued an extensive acquaintance with modern culture and entertained a constant concern for everything Mexican and Hispano-American. Further, they all exhibited seriousness, not only in their activities but also in considering the intellectual occupation a true vocation and not an activity marginal to the real tasks of life.[2]

The most characteristic trait of the members of the Ateneo de la Juventud was their opposition to positivism. The positivist theory denied metaphysics and theology and exalted science as the necessary instrument of social progress. Positivism was the philosophical basis for the regime that was governing Mexico at the time. The members of the Ateneo saw positivism as a defense of the Mexican dictator, President Profirio Díaz. Also, They saw it as a means of expanding the economic interests of the United States in Mexico, for the "Anglicizing" of Mexico and for the development of an empiricist-materialist philosophy.[3]

Positivism had been used effectively by cientificos (scientists) to justify President Díaz' continued control of Mexico. Darwinism, one of the theories promoted by positivism, proclaimed that the most fit survive. Díaz had survived three elections; therefore, according to the positivists, he was the most fit to govern Mexico.[4]

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[1] Mario de la Cueva and others, Major Trends in Mexican Philosophy (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966), p. 249.

[2] Ibid., p. 250.

[3] John H. Haddox, Vasconcelos of Mexico: Philosopher and Prophet (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1967), pp. 4-5.

[4] Ibid., p. 4.

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The purpose of the Ateneo de la Juventud was to "create a fervent interest throughout Mexico in Hispano-American ideals so that the Mexican people could find a legitimate mode of self-expression and thereby feel at home spiritually."[1] They also had as goals the overthrow of the Diaz regime, the ouster of foreign economic controls in Mexico, and the lessening of the influences of positivism on the educational system and cultural life in Mexico.[2]

The aims of the Ateneo de la Juventud were the same as those of the Revolution of 1910. The people complained that their country was "the mother of foreigners and the step-mother of Mexicans." Foreigners were treated like invited guests. Laws were changed to accomodate foreign business interests and enormous tracts of land were sold very cheaply to foreigners.

As foreign money poured into Mexico, the masses continued to live in poverty and illiteracy. The contrast between the rich and poor became even more marked.[3]

> What profited it them that "Mexico could borrow all the money it wanted at four percent" when they could not borrow or earn the few pesos necessary to release themselves from peonage? Of what value to them was it that 200 million pieces of mail flowed through the national post office when they could neither read nor write?[4]

It was the goal of the Revolution to return Mexico to the Mexicans and to rediscover the true essence of Mexico. This could only be achieved with Díaz' and the positivists' overthrow.

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[1]Patrick Romanell, "Bergson in Mexico: A Tribute to José Vasconcelos," Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, 21 (1960-61), 502-3.

[2]Haddox, op. cit., p. 5.

[3]Ronald Atkin, Revolution: Mexico 1910-20 (New York: John Day Co., 1970), pp. 22-3.

[4]Ernest Gruening, Mexico and Its Heritage (New York: The Century Co., 1928), p. 65.

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As political and social unrest increased and Francisco Madero's influence and power grew, a new phase of Vasconcelos' life opened. He began the involvement in politics which consumed much of his interest and time throughout most of his life. Vasconcelos became a propogandist for the forces of Madero, who opposed Díaz and were working for his defeat. Eventually, Vasconcelos had to flee to Washington, D.C. where he worked as a confidential agent for the Maderistas. After Diaz' defeat, Vasconcelos returned to Mexico.[1]

In 1920, after serving for brief periods as rector of the National University and as director of the Escuela Nacional Preparatoria, Vasconcelos was appointed Secretary of Public Education by Mexico's president, Alvaro Obregón. It was Vasconcelos' achievements in this post which earned him the title of "Father of Popular Education in Mexico."[2]

When he left the office of Secretary of Education, his political career did not end. He ran unsuccessfully for both the governorship of the state of Oaxaca and for the Mexican presidency.

Vasconcelos was torn between two careers--philosophy and politics. There were two reasons for his involvement in politics. He felt that it was his duty to resist the "exaltación de los malvados, los imbéciles"[3] ("triumph of the wicked, the imbeciles"[4]) in Mexican politics to oppose

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[1]Haddox, op. cit., p. 5.

[2]Romanell, Making of the Mexican Mind: A Study in Recent Mexican Thought (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1952), p. 97.

[3]Vasconcelos, La tormenta: segunda parte de Ulises criollo, Vol. I (1957) of Obras Completas, p. 992.

[4](Translation) W. Rex Crawford, A Mexican Ulysses (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1963), p. 118.

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corruption and tyranny. He also felt that it was his duty to work for better living and working conditions for Mexicans.

Vasconcelos wrote in El proconsulado:

> . . . me dolía pensar en los apuntes de mi Etica, abandonados, en el fondo de maletas que constantemente cambiaban de sitio. Y el tiempo que todavía tenia que dedicar a la lucha estéril, estúpida, de la política mexicana; pero esa lucha era para mí compromiso de honor, la única manera de rescatar el sacrificio de los que habían muerto por la regeneración de nuestra patria.[1]
>
> (. . . I felt distressed at the thought of my notes on Ethics lying abandoned in the bottom of suitcases that were constantly moving about. And the time that I still had to give to the sterile, stupid struggle of Mexican politics; but that struggle was something I was honor-bound to carry on, and was the only way to redeem the sacrifice of those who had died for the regeneration of our country.[2])

Finally disillusioned with politics, Vasconcelos dedicated himself in the nineteen-thirties, forties and fifties to the creation of an all-encompassing philosophical system, aesthetic monism. He had been working on this system sporadically over the years and, at last, would be able to bring his concepts to fruition.

In these years, Vasconcelos was involved in many activities in Mexico: lecturing at the Colegio Nacional, writing books and newspaper and magazine articles and running a private preparatory school. When President Avila Camacho assumed the presidency of Mexico in 1940, he asked Vasconcelos what position he would like in Camacho's government. Vasconcelos replied that he wished the directorship of the Biblioteca Nacional (the National Library). Vasconcelos held that post until 1947. He also directed the Biblioteca Mexico from 1945 until his death. The

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[1] Vasconcelos, El proconsulado: cuarta parte de Ulises criollo, Vol. II (1959) of Obras Completas, p. 510.

[2] (Translation) Crawford, p. 270

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Biblioteca Mexico was a newly instituted library in Mexico City. It was the largest and, by North American standards, the best equipped public library in the nation.

José Vasconcelos died June 30, 1959, and has been widely acclaimed as one of Mexico's greatest and most original thinkers.

Although Vasconcelos did not include in his writings a section entitled "Philosophy of Librarianship" this portion of his overall philosophy can be formulated from an analysis of his writings and activities in other areas, specifically philosophical, sociological and educational.

Vasconcelos' philosophy of aesthetic monism serves as the basis for his ideas in other areas. It is a synthesis of heterogeneous elements, not a homogenization of those elements but an amalgamation that respects and enhances the variety of the elements united.

The emergence of a "cosmic race" or a synthesis of the four races was predicted by the philosopher. This new race is to fulfill the "divine mission of America" or lead us to what Vasconcelos called an aesthetic state. Since according to Vasconcelos, such a society can only be realized by an emotional race which possesses a sense of beauty and because this gift is to a large extent a characteristic of the Latin American peoples, it naturally follows that it is their responsibility t to work toward the accomplishment of an aesthetic state.[1]

That the Anglo-Saxon and the Latin people have basic fundamental differences was one of Vasconcelos' stronger beliefs. He felt that the Latin peoples are geared more to aesthetics, ethics and religion; while the Anglo-Saxons are more pragmatic. This difference is what caused

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[1]Romanell, Making of the Mexican Mind, p. 133.

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Vasconcelos to reject the North American "learning by doing" pragmatic theory of education. Because Mexicans are culturally Latins, Vasconcelos felt that they should not be schooled in the Anglo-Saxon methods of inductive reasoning.

Vasconcelos was a perennialist. He felt that wester man was a Ulysses, the heir to great traditions and values.[1] The key to unlock these great ideas is in the great books. It is importatnt to understand the traditions in which one lives. A primary aid to understanding this tradition is by way of the great books. Thus, an education through the great books is an effective means of communicating the tradition of which we are a part.

To José Vasconcelos, libraries were sacred places, housing knowledge, ideals and fundamental values. He felt that they were sacred yet vital living places--not museums, holding useless relics of the past. It was also Vasconcelos' opinion that the librarian should be, in the truest sense, a philosopher.[2]

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[1] Vasconcèlos, De Robinson a Odiseo: pedagogía estructiva, Vol. II (1958) of Obras Completas, pp. 1526-28.

[2] Ibid., p. 868.

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Chapter 4

THE PHILOSOPHER

Speaking of himself as a young man and his venture into philosophical thought, Vasconcelos wrote in Ulises criollo:

> Aparte del interes de la fama, me movia en estos intentos la necessidad de hallar una clave o una formula de explicacion total de la vida, un sistema cabal del munod. Hallazgo semejante me hacia falta, no solo para iniciar un tratado de filosofia; tambien para enderezar y organizar mi propia vida interior, ansiosa de arquitectura. . . . Padecia entonces la embriaguez, el hipnotismo del Todo.[1]
>
> (Apart from interest in my own fame, what moved me in those attempts was the necessity of finding a key, a formular for explaining all life, a system cohesive with the universe. Finding this key was necessary not only for beginning a treatise on philosophy, but also in order form me to direct and organize my own inner life, so much in need of structuring, . . . I suffered from the intoxication, the hypnotism of the Whole.[2])

The philosophical system which Jose Vasconcelos organized is very broad and all-encompassing. For the purposes of this project it is neither feasible nor practical to deal with his system in its totality. Only those parts which, in the author's opinion, directly influence Vasconcelos' philosophy of librarianship will be dealt with here.

Vasconcelos announced that the time had come to construct a philosophical system based on something rather than pure, practical reasoning, the methodology that was so prevalent at the time.

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[1] Vasconcelos, Ulises criollo: la vida del autor escrita por el mismo, Vol. I (1957) of Obras Completas, 4 vols.; (Mexico: Libreros Mexicanos Unidos, 1957-1961), p. 519.

[2] (Translation) W. Rex Crawford, A Mexican Ulysses (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1963), p. 47.

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> Para estos señores la experience humana, anterior a Bacon o a Comte no tiene ningún valor; el saber comienza con los análisis celulares de Darwin, . . . La filosofía, cristianismo, el pensamiento oriental, los grandes moviemientos históricos, todo esto, era letra muera por los sabios miopes y para los spencerianos bizcos. En fin una filosofía primitiva y provinciana con pretenciones de universalismo, porque representaba el poderío material de una raza de commerciantes, antimística, antiheroica, y artireligiosa. . . .
>
> Finalmente creo que ha llegado la era de las filosofías estéticas, de filosofías fundadas ya no en la razón pura, ni en razón práctica, sino el misterio del jucio estético. El principio unifacador, capaz de participar de las tres formas de actividad, la intellectual, la moral y la estética. . . .[1]

> (For these gentlemen [the scientists], human experience, before Bacon and Comte, has no value; knowledge begins with the cellular analysis of Darwin, . . . Philosophy, Christianity, oriental thought and great historical movements are all dead words for the short-sighted and cross-eyed Spencerians. Finally, it represents a primitive and provincial philosophy with universal pretentions because it is the material power of a race of merchants--antimystic, antiheroic and antireligious. . . .
>
> Finally, I believe the era has come for aesthetic philosophies, of philosophies not founded in pure reason, nor in practical reason, but in the mystery of aesthetic judgement. The unifying principle capable of participating in the three forms of activity, the intellectual, the moral and the aesthetic.[2])

Our philosopher attacked positivism and other philosophies which glorified reason and facts and disregarded intuition and the aesthetic. Vasconcelos felt that those philosophies had no fundamental principles, no essential concepts. He referred to them as "spiritual plagues" which held society captive. The philosophical system which Vasconcelos conceived contradicted the pragmatic positivist theories and organized a system according to aesthetics and tradition.[3]

The philosophical system of aesthetic monism constitutes the unification of science, morality and art. It is a synthesis of heterogeneous

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[1]Vasconcelos, El monismo estético, Vol. IV (1961) of Obras Completas, pp. 15-6.

[2]Author's translation.

[3]Vasconcelos, El monismo estético, pp. 9-10.

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elements, not a homogenization. The system respects and enhances the variety of all the elements combined. Aesthetic monism is a philsophy that does not want to eliminate a single property of things.[1]

This concept does not attempt to reduce reality to a common denominator, thus it avoids the error of science--the error of trying to place all of reality into neat and compact formulas. Science finds it useful to reduce reality to logical and mathematical terms, but this is not the way to understand the totality and unity of life.[2]

Reason and logic are no more than stepping stones to the higher knowledge of the universe. Aesthetic judgement goes beyond pure and practical reason, not against them. Vasconcelos defines the aesthetic approach as a supra-intellectual manifestation of consciousness, it is nothing impulsive or sub-intellectual.[3]

To think is an effort toward achieving unity, it is a discovery of the relations among beings. Compared to the passive knowledge of logic, active knowledge which evolves through rhythm, melody and harmony delivers facts in reality.[3]

> Para evitar la traducción de mi panorama en abstracciones, hago lo que el artista: observo en mi pequeña porción de realidad, sus relaciones, sus proporciones, sus luces y lo que añade al panorama, mi emoción, mis recuerdos. Se trata de un conjunto, hecho de imágenes y estados de ánimo, ligados por varios sistemas de orden: el sistema de la experiencia científica, que me dice cómo surgieron las cosas que tengo delante y cómo se relacionan entre sí físicamente. Actúa, asimismo, todo un sistema moral que establece relaciones entre los objetos, y mi conducta disfruta además conforme a leyes de belleza que

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[1]Vasconcelos, Todología (Filosofía de la coordinación), Vol. IV (1961) of Obras Completas, pp. 817-19.

[2]Stanley D. Ivie, "Aesthetic Monism and Education," Peabody Journal of Education, 48 (October, 1970), 64.

[3]Vasconcelos, Todología, pp. 833-36.

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son el origen del beneplácito que me causa la intervención de mi conciencia en el orden natural que contemplo. Al vivir dentro de lo concreto, con los propósitos de mi voluntad y los goces de mi contemplación, que distingue, asimila y ordena, disfruto de un vivr que a falta de otro nombre he titulado paradisíaco, . . .[1]

(To avoid the translation of my panorama into abstraction, I do what the artist does: I observe in my small portion of reality its relations, its proportions, its lights and that which my emotions and memories add to the panorama. It is a question of a conjunction made up of images and states of soul, bound together by various systems of order: the system of scientific experience which tells me how the things which I hold before me came to be and how they are related to each other in a physical sense. In like manner there acts an entire moral system which establishes relations between objects and my conduct. Moreover, I enjoy conforming to the laws of beauty which are the origin of the satisfaction caused in me by the intervention of my consciousness in the natural order which I contemplate. By living within the concrete order, by the projects of my will and the joys of my contemplations which distinguishes, assimilates and orders, I participate in a mode of life which I have called paradisal, . . .[2])

The theme of this philosophical theory is reality itself. Vasconcelos holds that the seizure of reality will occur in a clear hierarchy; first through the senses, then reason and finally through imagination and revelation.[3] Man's greatest potential is to reach the aesthetic level where reality will be preceived through intuition, imagination and revelation.

Vasconcelos classified knowledge into branches which embrace all of life: sciences of description (physics), sciences of invention (ethics), and sciences of synthesis (aesthetics). (For a more precise delimitation of the different classifications, see the appendix.)

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[1]Vasconcelos, Todología, p. 857.

[2](Translation) Mario de la Cueva and others, Major Trends in Mexican Philosophy (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966), p. 267-68.

[3]Vasconcelos, Todología, p. 864.

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Vasconcelos not only had a compulsion for finding unity in reality, but he also had to put reality into some kind of order. He had a penchant for ordering, classifying and cataloging all of life. In libraries he felt that there should be an established method of organizing knowledge and materials. He never stated a preference for any specific system, only the need for it.

Vasconcelos felt that when man had reached the aesthetic state, when he ceased to regard the physical as all powerfull and began to see the world in its beauty and unity that he would have achieved something sublime. Thus, it seems that the duty of the library is to provide the guide to reaching that sublime state and the librarian should already have reached that state.

This does not mean that libraries should only include materials which Vasconcelos would consider aesthetic. His philosophy firmly insists on maintaining the integrity of all levels of science and learning. But it is important to remember that Vasconcelos feels that man's potential and therefore his goal goes beyond the physical and into the spiritual.

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Chapter 5

THE SOCIOLOGIST

Although José Vasconcelos' sociological writings and opinions may seem to have little to do with his philosophy of librarianship, when viewed as part of a whole this area adds considerable depth. Vasconcelos' sociological opinions influence his thoughts on education and librarianship.

Spain, in Vasconcelos' opinion, deserved special respect from Latin American countries. She was the mother country and he treated her with the reverence due an ancestor. Vasconcelos felt that it was absurd to reject one's true heritage in favor of foreign influences as he thought Mexico had done.

This reverence of Spain expanded itself beyond the geographical boundaries of Spain to include Greece and Rome. Castille and Andalusia possess the heritage of Greece which left colonies on the Spanish coast. The Roman colonies were successors to those left on the Iberian peninsula by the Greeks. The classic Greek and Roman civilizations contributed much to Spanish civilization and therefore to the Latin American heritage.[1]

The Spanish portion is not the whole of the Latin American heritage, according to Vasconcelos, but it is the civilizing and the cohesive portion which unites all of Latin America.

In Bolivarismo y Monroism, Vasconcelos elaborates upon the plan

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[1] José Vasconcelos, Discursos: 1920-50 (Mexico: Ediciones Botas, 1950), pp. 180-81.

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first proposed by Simon Bolivar in 1826 of joining the Latin Americans in a political and economic union.

> Llamaremos bolivarismo al ideal hispanoamericano de crear una fedaracion con todos los pueblos de cultura espanola. Llamaremos moroismo al ideal anglosajon de incorporar las veinte naciones hispanicas al Imperio nordico, mediante la politca del pan americanismo.[1]
>
> (We call Bolivarism the Spanish American ideal of creating a federation of all the lands of Spanish culture; we call Monroism the Anglo-Saxon ideal of incorporating the twenty Hispanic nations in a North American empire achieved by the political means of Pan Americanism.[2])

Vasconcelos felt that Bolivarismo was the strongest force to oppose the domination of Latin America by either European powers or the United States.

This was not the only reason for Vasconcelos' support of Bolivarism. He stated, "In the south, we are one, morally and racially, . . ."[3] He also believed that the Spanish American nations best provided the elements necessary for reaching the highest aesthetic state.

Vasconcelos stated "that there exists a deep, important difference between the people of Latin America and the people of Anglo-Saxon America."[4] He goes on to say that the difference is important because it is of a spiritual nature.

> Perhaps it lies in the manner of feeling and the manner of expressing our feelings of life. It is in the type of our higher

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[1] Vasconcelos, Bolivariamo y monroismo: temas iberoamericanos Vol. II (1958) of Obras Completas, 4 vols.; (Mexico: Libreros Mexicanos Unidos, 1957-1961), p. 1305.

[2] (Translation) John H. Haddox, Vasconcelos of Mexico: Philosopher and Prophet (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1967), p. 64.

[3] Jose Vasconcelos and Manuel Gamio, Aspects of Mexican Civilization (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1926), p. 19.

[4] Ibid., p. 20.

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desires and in the manner we go about our pleasures that we can best be distinguished one from another.[1]

Vasconcelos explained that the difference is natural because our parent cultures on the European continent are different. The Latin Americans are a sort of readaption of the Mediterreanean standard and manners of life while North Americans are a sort of enlarged Baltic civilization.

He believed that the spiritual differences need not cause a conflict because only material differences cause rivalry. Spiritual differences tend to tighten the human bonds; we find pleasure in differences of tast and each peculiarity enriches humanity.[2]

One of the most well accepted ideas put forth by Jose Vasconcelos was the prediction of the evolution of a "cosmic race." Through the long process of evolution humanity has been reduced to four racial stocks, "la blanca, la india, la negra y la amarilla, . . ."[3] ("the white, the Indian, the black and the yellow, . . . "[4]). Vasconcelos predicted that the future would be entrusted to a new race, a "cosmic race." This new race was to come about through hybrdization of the four existing races. "Hybridism in man, as well as in plants, tends to produce better types and tends to rejuvenate those types which are static."[5]

When the Spanish began to colonize the New World they created the beginnings of the hybrid race. When they mated with the natives, t

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Ibid., p. 20-1.

[3] Vasconcelos, La tormenta: segunda parte de Ulises criollo, Vol. I (1957) of Obras Completas, p. 1250.

[4] Author's translation.

[5] Vasconcelos and Gamio, op. cit., p. 85.

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the Spaniards gave birth to the mestizo. Because the hybridization had already begun there, Vasconcelos believed that Latin America was the source of the "cosmic race."

This new cosmic race was to have a special mission. Vasconcelos stated that societies pass through three stages. The first stage is the material; it is a state of war, of struggle and destruction. In this stage all is dominated by brute force and primitive will. The second stage is characterized by technical organization and systematic cultures produced by intellect directing action. Here reason prevails, laws are formed and regulations of social, political and economic institutions come into being. The final stage is an aesthetic state. This is the constructive summit, the state of sublime vision, when all values are organized and integrated. When this state is reached the spiritual and creative forces in man will be most active.[1]

> Si reconocemos que la Humanidad gradualmente se acerca la tercer periodo de su destino, compredéremos que la obra de fusion de las razas se va a verificar en el continente iberoamericano conforme a una ley derivada del goce de las funciones mas altas. Las leyes de la emocion, la belleza y la alegria regiran la eleccion de parejas, con un resultado infinitamente superior al de esa eugenica fundada en la razon cientifica que nunca mira mas que la porcion menos importatne del suceso amoroso. Por encima de la eugenica cientifica prevalecera la eugenica misteriosa del gusto estetico.[2]
>
> (If we realize that Humanity is gradually moving toward this epoch of its destiny, we will understand that the work of fusion of the races will be realized in the Ibero-American continent according to a law derived from the enjoyment of the highest functions. The laws of emotion, beauty, and happiness will regulate the choice of a mate with a result infinitely superior to that derived from a scientific eugenics which misses the most important phase, that of love. Beyond this scientific eugenics will prevail the mysterious eugenics of aesthetic pleasure.[3])

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[1] Vasconcelos, La raza cosmica, Vol. II (1958) of Obras Completas p. 928.

[2] Ibid., p. 931.

[3] (Translation) Haddox, Vasconcelos of Mexico, p. 60.

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It is the mission of the New World to bring society to the aesthetic state. Vasconcelos believed that this could only be achieved by an emotional race that possesses a sense of beauty. These qualities are found to a great extent among the Latin American people. It was Vasconcelos' conclusion, therefore, that it was the privilege and responsibility of Latin America to work toward the realization of the aesthetic state.

The theory of the "cosmic race" was met favorably by the people of Latin America. At last they were given a reason to have pride in their mestisage (mixed blood). They were told that of all the peoples of the world that they were the closest to the "cosmic race," and that through them the divine mission of creating a new civilization would come about.[1]

Years later, Vasconcelos explained that since he was neither mulato of mestizo (part black or part Indian) he could not be accused of self-interest when he espoused his concept of the mission of the races. It was not a personal sense of guilt or inferiority which prompted him to strive for something better. He was merely an "apostol de parias, abogado de clientes que no tienen fe en su propia causa"[2] (apostle of outcasts, lawyer of clients who have no faith in their own cause"[3]).

A hybridization of the races is not enough to bring about social progress, there must be the correct political atmosphere. Democracy, according to Vasconcelos, is the only type of government which encourages and produces social progress. He stated: "All of the political

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[1] Vasconcelos, La raza cósmica, p. 940.

[2] Vasconcelos, El proconsulado: cuarta parte de Ulises criollo, Vol. II (1959) of Obras Completas, p. 383.

[3] Author's translation.

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problems of Latin America, and very particularly Mexico, can be summed up in these two words: 'democracy or dictatorship.'"[1]

> In order to make democracy a solid practice in our land we only have to follow the example of Sarmiento, the example of Juarez and of Madero. This means two main remedies--one that is slow to show results: public education; and the tohers: political propoganda in favor of civilized forms of government, put into effect by honest civilian leaders. You cannot educate, however, until you get a clean government, because moral authority is the main force of the educator and this moral authority cannot be shown by an agent and follower of dictatorship. Political propoganda and sacrifice to establish the rights of citizenship ought to be, then, the first means of salvation.[2]

To summarize Vasconcelos' theories on sociology, the highest aim of civilization is to reach the aesthetic state which has been discussed in this and the preceding chapter. This state can only be reached if a man is free to think and to learn, to grow and to develop to his fullest potential.

This ideal state can best be reached by an emotional race with a sense of beauty and aesthetics. At this point, the Latin people exemplify these qualities to a higher degree than any of the other races. They form the beginnings of the "cosmic race," an amalgamation of the best of all races and cultures. Vasconcelos felt that a necessary step for achieving this state is a rebrith of pride in past heritage and traditions, which form the very foundation of their civilization.

The Latin Americans had been convinced in the preceeding centuries of their own inferiority to the Anglo-Saxons. They had lost their own cultural identity. The Monroe Doctrine was considered, by many Latin Americas, as an attempt by Anglo-Saxons to make political pawns and economic satellites of the Latin American countries.

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[1] Vasconcelos and Gamio, Aspects of Mexican Civilization, p. 67.

[2] Ibid., p. 70.

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For Vasconcelos, the libraries would serve as founts of traditions, values and heritage, where cultural and spiritual voids could be filled. When these voids have been filled the Mexican nations can begin to progress toward the aesthetic state and serve as an example to the remainder of the world.

The libraries should hold the keys to the best of all races and cultures. They should represent in books, art and music the hybridization of culture.

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Chapter 6

THE EDUCATOR

The educational system of a given nation is always the cultural by-product of the social forces that have shaped the nation's history. Mexico is not an exception and, therefore, if one desires to understand her educational system he must see it within the context of the historical, philosophical and social forces that have made it what it is.[1]

Up to the Revolution of 1910, Mexico's educational system was controlled to a large extent by the <u>cientificos</u> (scientists) of President Díaz' regime, in order to maintain President Díaz and the aristocracy in power. Postivism, materialism and the leading scientific theories of the day provided the philosophical and social basis for their continued control of the country.

Within this historical context, Vasconcelos began to express his feelings on education at a meeting of the Ateneo de la Juventud in 1910. In that meeting he delivered a lecture entitled "Don Gabino Barreda y las ideas contemporáneas," in which he questioned Barreda's (the head of public education in the nation) denial of artistic and metaphysical values and his excessive faith in the scientific method. He concluded, "El positivismo de Comte y de Spencer nunca pudo contener

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[1]Stanley D. Ivie, "Mexican Education in Cultural Perspective," University of Arizona, College of Education Monograph Series, #5, 1971.

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nuestras aspiraciones."[1] ("The positivism of Comte and Spencer could never satisfy our aspirations."[2])

The same university youth that founded the Ateneo de la Juventud also labored in bringing culture to the people. They established the Popular University in December of 1912, the first free instituition of culture devoted to the spreading of ideas in the factories and in popular centers, attempting to organize a brotherhood of workers. It continued for ten years despite the unsettled conditions of the revolution-torn country.[3]

In the year 1919, Vasconcelos received his first opportunity to apply his philosophy to the educational problems of Mexico. However, before a program of federal education could begin, a national law had to be written. It was while Vasconcelos was Rector of the National University that he wrote the law creating the post of Secretary of Public Education and permitting the federal government to establish primary schools in all of the republic. Because of his aesthetic outlook on life he divided the department of the Secretary of Education into three departments: schools, libraries, and the fine arts. When the bill was enacted, Vasconcelos was appointed the first Secretary of Public Education.[4]

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[1]Vasconcelos, "Don Gabino Barreda y las ideas contemporáneas," Vol. I (1957) of Obras Completas, 4 vols.; (Mexico: Libreros Mexicanos Unidos, 1957-1961), p. 55.

[2]Author's translation.

[3]Francisco Larroyo, Historia Comparada de La Educación en México. (Mexico: Editorial Porrua, 1959), p. 341.

[4]Vasconcelos, Cartas y documentos Vol. II (1959) of Obras Completas, pp. 777-85.

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The Indian and the Spanish cultural background of Mexico continues to present a social and educational dilemma to Mexico's educational system. There has always remained the question of the proper education for Mexico. Vasconcelos offered one answer to this question. He felt that education should offer the means for one to surpass himself metaphysically. Thus, Mexican education must transcend Mexican culture. This did not ignore Mexico's heritage and traditions, but they became the means of reaching a higher level.

> Una verdadera educación no es completa si le falta aliento que sólo puede engendrar un gran propósito, un alto ideal. La conquista de la libertad y del bienestar económico, de las comodidades físicas . . . El fin último de la vida es algo que trasciede y que supera a los más importantes propósitos sociales, y esto nos obliga a meditar en el objeto verdadero de la vida . . . Por esto, una y otra vez procuramos recordar a los niños mexicanos la existencia de un alto propósito al que todo debe sacrificarse. . . de cada hombre contribuya al la superación de la vida misma en el universo.[1]
>
> (True education is not complete unless it has a great purpose or a high ideal. The conquest of liberty and economic welfare are only physical commodities . . . The ultimate end of life is something that transcends and that is above the most important social purposes. This obligates us to meditate on the true meaning of life . . . For this reason, once again, we need to remind Mexican children of the existence of a higher purpose which we should all sacrifice . . . that each man contributes to the surpassing of life itself in the universe.[2])

The new education was to be founded on Mexican blood, the Mexican tongue and the Mexican people. The positivist ideals of order and progress of the Anglo-Saxons were replaced by a new motto, "Por mi raza hablará el espiritu"[3] (The spirit shall speak through my race"[4]).

> The character of the educational movement was organic. It was not the isolated work of one extraordinary man--though Vasconcelos was certainly that--but rather an accomplishment of the Revolution, and its realization expressed the finest and most secret element of

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[1] Ibid., p. 873.

[2] Author's translation.

[3] Ibid., p. 777.

[4] Author's translation.

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> the revolutionary movement. Poets, painters, prose writers, teachers, architects and musicians all collaborated in the project. All, that is, of the Mexican intelligentsia, or almost all. It was a social effort, but one that required the presence of a man who could catch fire and then transmit his enthusiasm to others. Vasconcelos, as a philosopher and a man of action, possessed that unity of vision which brings coherance to diverse plans, and although he sometimes overlooked details, he never lost himself in them. His work, subject to a number of necessary and not always happy corrections, was the work of a founder not of a mere technician.
>
> Vasconcelos conceived of instruction as active participation. Schools were established, readers and the classics were published, institutes were created, and cultural missions were sent to the remotest parts of the country. At the same time, the intelligentsia turned toward the people, discovering their true nature and eventually making them the center of its activities. The popular arts emerged again, after centuries of having been ignored; the old songs were sung once more in schools and concert halls; the regional dances with their pure and timid movements, combining flight and immobility, fire and reserve, were danced for a wider audience. Contemporary Mexican painting was born. Some of our writers turned their eyes to the colonial past, and others used Indian themes; but the most courageous faced up to the present, and created the novels of the Revolution. After the lies and pretences of the dictatorship, Mexico suddenly discovered herself, with astonished and loving eyes: "We are the prodigal sons of a homeland which we cannot even define but which we are beginning at last to observe. She is Castilian and Moorish, with Aztec markings."[1]

Vasconcelos' educational philosophy was philosophically concieved as aesthetic monism which included all cultural agencies--art, music and literature contributed to the formulation and communication of educational ideals.[2] Vasconcelos wanted to base the school system on tradition, their own tradition which would provide the link to a universal tradition that would enlarge and justify their own.[3]

In 1935, in the work entitled De Robinson a Odiseo, Vasconcelos attempted to explain his theory of education, after he had resigned as

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[1]Octavio Paz, The Labyrinth of Solitude: Life and Thought in Mexico (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1961), pp. 152-3.

[2]George F. Kneller, The Education of the Mexican Nation (New York: Columbia University Press, 1951), p. 205.

[3]Ibid., p. 154.

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the Secretary of Public Education. Robinson symbolizes "el metódo estuto, improvisador y exclusivamente técnico que caracteriza la era anglosajona del mundo"[1] ("the estute method, the improvisor and exclusively technical person that characterizes the Anglo-Saxon era of the world"[2]) and in Odiseo the classic hero who carried with him 2,000 years of tradition and whose aim is not to conquer the physical and practical aspects of life but the spiritual and universal ones.

Vasconcelos' main thrust was opposition to the underlying assumptions of Dewey's pragmatic theory of education. (Pragmatism being the United State's equivalent of Europe's positivism.) Vasconcelos contended that Dewey's accent on "learning by doing" produced a Robinsonian type of individual; accomodating the child to his environment. It produced a "Babbitt" man who was excessively preoccupied by small external problems and who loses his capacity for reflective thought. Vasconcelos felt that progressive education (pragmatism or positivism) also had religious overtones, in that it was just the application of Protestant doctrine and technique to the field of education.

When civilized man wishes to construct a house he does not precede in a "Robinsonian" manner, as if on a desert island; that is, accumulate the materials and then build as best he is able. In the same manner, in the education of a scholar the least of our purposes is to turn him into a pioneer for there is no place in the world left for him, therefore we must fight off primitive teaching to improvise. Although Defoe's Robinson Cruso had to start from the beginning, we don't,for

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[1]Vasconcelos, De Robinson a Odiseo: pedagogía estructiva, Vol. II (1958) of Obras Completas, p. 1497.

[2]Author's translation.

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ours is a ready-made world and not a desert island. Vasconcelos contended that even if Dewey's theories were successful in a Protestant country like the United States, they could hardly be workable in a Catholic country.[1]

Ulysses became for Vasconcelos a symbol of the Latin American mind, "and odiseismo the kind of education that would pose and answer the ultimate questions about the purpose of the universe."[2]

According to Vasconcelos, Latin students naturally ask the "why" in seeking a general conception of life. Therefore, any educational plan, not only included religion but also language and blood. A Latin education would not be content with the techniques of science but must be crowned by ethics, aesthetics and religion. The Mexicans are culturally Latins and they should not be schooled in Anglo-Saxon methods. Rather, the Mexican school system should attempt to create a "New Ulysses," a man who had not been trained in knowledge for power but one with a liberal education, one who could enjoy ideas as ends-in-themselves.

The teacher much like a wise gardener, must cultivate and protect the organism from harm. But the child is not a plant for it has a soul and care must be taken by the teacher to help that soul with its divine destiny in realizing its spiritual mission. "No le basta al educador con nutrir el alma; necesita . . . incitar su desarrollo para que siga la estructuración activa que conduce a la unidad, . . ."[3] ("It is not

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[1]Ibid., pp. 1495-1500.

[2]Stanley D. Ivie, "A Comparison in Educational Philosophy: Jose Vasconcelos and John Dewey," Comparative Education Review, 1966 (October, 1966), p. 405.

[3]Vasconcelos, De Robinson a Odiseo, p. 1715.

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enough for the educator to nourish the soul: it is necessary . . . to align its development in accordance with the structure that conducts unity."[1]) A transcendental purpose has been assigned to education and the teacher has become a guide through the natural and into the supernatural.

For Vasconcelos, the real center of the school must be the conscience of the teacher, and not in the form of only a passive role but actively directing what is learning. The teacher becomes the center in formulating the learning theory and as a model for conduct.

"La educación ideal es, por lo mismo, la que establece el contacto directo entre los iluminado y la multitude, entre el maestro y los discípulos."[2] ("The ideal education is one that establishes direct contact between the illuminated and the multitude, between the teacher and his disciples."[3]) The teacher must be prepared to help the student who naturally seeks a general conception of the universe. He is one step ahead of the student. "Buen maestro es quien establece o restablece al contacto puro y directo del alma joven con las almas grandes a fin de que su influjo opere el milagro del contagio."[4] ("The good teacher is the one that establishes direct and pure contact of the souls of the young with the great spiritual figures of history so that their influence may work the miracle of contagion."[5])

The Librarian

Vasconcelos was a great supporter of libraries. From the birth of

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[1]Author's translation.

[2]Ibid., p. 1716.

[3]Author's translation.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Author's translation.

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the office of Secretary of Public Education, Vasconcelos provided for their support and development. One branch of the Secretary of Public Education was devoted entirely to libraries. It was, according to Vasconcelos, a natural complement to schools. As vital as any workshop, the library was in itself an educational institution. It was Vasconcelos' opinion that the lack of libraries would only result in a regression to illiteracy.

According to Vasconcelos' directives, libraries were to be set up in all schools and communities. They were to be staffed and equipped to handle all situations.

The educator's plan for libraries included seven different grades of libraries. Each was to accomplish specific goals.

The first grade of library was to be the biblioteca ambulante. They were to reach the most remote areas of Mexico. Made up of fifty books, each collection would stay in each community for a month of two. Then, in a special box on the back of a mule or horse, they would be moved to another community and a different collection of fifty books would take their place. This way the biblioteca ambulante could provide a complete region with a circulating library and a good variety of books. The number and distribution of these libraries was to depend on the needs of the small communities.

The second level in the library system was the rural library. These were to be established in a small room annexed to the school. The school's teacher was to be given additional salary to maintain the library and to keep it open after school hours.

The third grade of libraries in the plan was the school library. The Department of Libraries was to give each school library a general collection and supplementary books for each course. If the director of

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the school wanted to add any book to the standard collection, he could request it directly from the Department of Libraries. This aided the library in keeping up with the needs of the locale.

The urban libraries constituted the fourth stage. These had their own facility, either a separate building or attached to a school if the school were adequate and modern. These libraries were to serve communities of 5,000 people and have a collection of no less than 1,000 books. In large cities these urban libraries were to be established in various parts of the city, but were to be convenient and to have easy access for working people.

The fifth level of libraries were the special or technical libraries. They were to provide for the needs of secondary, technical and professional schools.

The sixth stage was made up of the great public libraries of the large cities. What characterizes them is that they were to have an unlimited number of volumes.

The seventh and final stage was to be the National Library. This was to serve as an archive, library of the nation and public monument.[1]

The collections of these libraries were also outlined by Vasconcelos. Of the core of fifty books, fifteen were to be technical, the specific areas would depend on the needs of the community. Another fifteen were to complement the school curriculum, dictionaries, atlases, histories, grammars, etc. The remaining twenty of the core fifty were to be universal and national classics--the Iliad and Odyssey, Divine Comedy, Don Quixote, Martin Fierro, etc.

The rural and urban libraries were merely to fill in each of the

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[1]Vasconcelos, De Robinson a Odiseo, pp. 1694-98.

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areas with appropriate books to fill their spcific needs.

The collections of the special and technical libraries were to be built around their own needs and areas of specialization.

The great libraries were to have and make available what was published without censorship. The same basic proportions as the basic fifty books were to be used in making up the collections.

The selction of books was to depend on the needs, background and inclinations of its users.[1]

In order to have books to make up these collections, Vasconcelos inaugurated a printing press to publish the much needed volumes. Primers, advanced textbooks, technical manuals, translations of the classics and national classics were published. All of these were given to schools and libraries for free and sold to the public at cost.[2]

Vasconcelos had a great enthusiasm for the classics. In creating the aesthetic society they were to play a major role, because they stress the universal properties of man. The classics take man beyond his everyday world and make him ambitious for the divine. Classics expand and enrich man's experience and they give him a chance to reflect upon the values of western civilization. The classics cultivate eternal values.[3]

> Nada me parece más urgente que acercar a la juventud, desde la infancia, a los grandes modelos de todos los tiempos. No hay mejor cura para la mediocridad de la época. . . .
> En este particular, el buen libro, la novela artística y de alta calidad literaria, seran el mejor recurso, mejor que la prohibición, para alejar a los jovenes de los libros vulgares.[4]

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[1] Ibid., pp. 1698-1701.

[2] Vasconcelos, Cartas y Documentos, pp. 869-70.

[3] Vasconcelos, "Educacion clasica," Novedades, 6 mayo de 1950, p. 4.

[4] Vasconcelos, De Robinson a Odiseo, pp. 1565-66.

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> (Nothing seems to me more urgent than to get youth, from infancy, near the great models of all times. There is no better cure for mediocrity in this epic. . . .
> In this particular, the good book, the artistic novel of high literary quality, will be a much better recourse, better than prohibition to draw the youth away from vulgar books.[1])

From 1940 until 1947, Vasconcelos held the post of Director of the National Library. By his own request he was appointed to it by President Camacho of Mexico. In speaking specifically of the National Library, Vasconcelos referred to it as "el palacio del alma collective nacional, . . . mansión de espíritu inmoral de una raza digna del Espíritu."[2] (the palace of the national soul, . . . mansion of the immortal spirit of a race that is worthy of the spirit."[3]) This definition can be expanded to included all the libraries in the nation.

In the year 1945, Vasconcelos was given the Directorship of Biblioteca Mexico, an arm of the Secretary of Public Education, in order to aid its organization and development. He held this post until his death in 1959. In a speech given at the inaugural of the Biblioteca Mexico, Vasconcelos summed up his thoughts on libraries:

> Muchos grandes entre nosotros, representados por sus libros, y todos son pilares de la casa espiritual que es esta biblioteca. En ella cabe el mundo de pensamiento y no para reposar en sus anaqueles, sino para encenderse en la conciencia de los lectores; para irradiar en toda la amplitud y hermosura de la creacion total del hombre. El hombre, que no sin razon ha oido llamaco: imagen y semejansa de Dios.[4]
>
> (There are many great people among us, represented by their books, and all are pillars of the spiritual house that is the library. In her is contained all of the thought of the world and not just to look over them on the library shelves, but in order to set on fire the conscience of the readers; to radiate in all of its amplitude and beauty of creation the total man. Man; that not without reason has been called: the image and likeness of God.[5])

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[1]Author's translation.

[2]Ibid., p. 1701.

[3]Author's translation.

[4]Vasconcelos, Discursos: 1920-50 (Mexico: Ediciones Botas, 1950), pp. 239-40.

[5]Author's translation.

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Chapter 7

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In accordance with the project, as set forth, José Vasconcelos' philosophy of librarianship was to be developed. To accomplish this, a thorough study was made into Vasconcelos' writings which, in the author's opinion, are relevant to the formulation of Vasconcelos' philosophy of librarianship. As has already been stated, there are few, if any, sources available in the United States which deal directly with the subject. Secondary sources were used to give added depth and credence to the time period and José Vasconcelos' role in it.

Man's ultimate achievement, in Vasconcelos' opinion, is reaching what he referred to as an aesthetic state. This state was built upon all facets of life. When it is reached, one will be able to see all of reality in its beauty and unity. All of reality will be seen as a whole, with no part taking precedence above the other. In this stage those spiritual traits will be greatly amplified.

Vasconcelos felt that Latin Americans as a people were closer to reaching the aesthetic state because they were not as devoted to inductive reasoning as Anglo-Saxons. However, because of the political, economic and religious dominations of Latin America by Anglo-Saxon nations, the Latin American people were not aware of their great potential. This problem would be alleviated if the Latin American and more specifically, the Mexican, people would become aware of the traditions and heritage that are theirs. If the Mexicans and other Latin

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Americans were free to develop in their own culture and not in the shadow of Anglo-Saxon culture, they would soon reach the aesthetic state.

In keeping with his philosophy of aesthetic monism, Vasconcelos felt that education should enable man to transcend himself, to become something superior to a pragmatic Robinsonian. The teacher should guide his students through the natural and into the supernatural. The ultimate goal of education should not be to teach man to cope with his environment; it should be to guide man to the state where he is above the physical and concerned with the spiritual. This does not mean that Vasconcelos felt that learning practical skills of physical properties was unimportant. He felt that it was important, but only as stepping-stones to aesthetic knowledge.

While desiring to find unity in reality, Vasconcelos also wanted to place reality into some kind of order. He classified and codified knowledge into areas which correspond to the levels of development in his philosophy of aesthetic monism. He wanted to discover where each piece fit into the puzzle of "the Whole."

All of these points have some relevance to Vasconcelos' philosophy of librarianship. Libraries were to provide the guides for reaching the aesthetic state and librarians should either have reached or be well on the way to reaching it. How else could they help lead their fellowment to that sublime order? They should be steeped in the knowledge of man from its most elementary levels to its divine potential.

Vasconcelos also felt that the great books provide impetus toward achieving the aesthetic state. They stress the universal properties of man and make him ambitious for the divine.

Libraries are the spiritual pillars of civilization. They are

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the fount of traditions and values. They hold the keys to the best of all races and cultures.

Since man's final goal is to reach the aesthetic state, it is also the goals of librarianship to provide the means for reaching that state.

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APPENDIX

I. Sciences of Nature

Physics--Dynamics

(a) Method: Discovery

(b) Laws: Measurable rhythms--Gravitation

(c) Object: Qualification of existence for its use

1. Mathematics
2. Physics
3. Cosmology
4. Geology
5. Geography
6. Mineralogy
7. Chemistry
8. Mechanics

II. Sciences of Life

Ethics--Art

(a) Method: Invention

(b) Laws: Instinct--Will--Ingenuity

(c) Object: Quality of existence through notions of emotion for its betterment

1. Biology
2. Natural history
3. Physiology
4. Psychology
5. Ethics
6. Medicine
7. Engineering
8. Law
9. History
10. Economics
11. Politics
12. Sociology

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III. Sciences of the Spirit

Aesthetics--Mysticism

(a) Method: Emotion

(b) Law: Fusion, coordination of heterogeneities in dynamicisms that transcend the particular and the temporal. Beauty

(c) Object: Transfigured existence. Perfection

1. The Apollonian--Plastic

Painting

Sculpture

Architecture

Music

Dance

2. The Dionysian--Literature

Poetry

Tragedy

Symphony

3. The Mystical--Illumination

Music

Philosophy

Relgion

Adapted from Vasconcelos, De Robinson a Odiseo, p. 1539 and Haddox, Vasconcelos of Mexico, pp. 76-77.

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